

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

INTRODUCED BY BARRETT, B. OLSON, RIPLEY, D. BROWN, HIMMELBERGER, PETERSON, MCNUTT,
MAEDJE, RICE, STAHL, JACKSON, LAMBERT, WITT, WAGMAN, BUTCHER, HEINERT, MACLAREN,
A. OLSON, SONJU, STOKER, WARD, ARNTZEN

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO EVALUATE AND DETERMINE THE STATUS OF
WILDERNESS AREAS, WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS, AND OTHER LAND SET-ASIDE AREAS AND TO
ANALYZE THE IMPACTS OF WILDERNESS AREAS, WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS, AND OTHER LAND
SET-ASIDE AREAS ON MONTANA AND ITS CITIZENS; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF
THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 60TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the National Wilderness Preservation System was created on September 3, 1964, when
Congress passed and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act; and

WHEREAS, Montana has 15 designated wilderness areas totaling 3,442,416 acres; and

WHEREAS, the Wilderness Act was passed with the intent of leaving lands for preservation and
protection in their natural condition; and

WHEREAS, the Wilderness Act provides under special provisions that "such measures may be taken
as may be necessary in the control of fire, insects, and diseases, subject to such conditions as the Secretary
[of Agriculture] deems desirable"; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Montana are entitled to know the condition and health of the acres
designated in Montana as wilderness.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to
section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to examine and review the health, status, and ~~impact~~
IMPACTS, BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, of wilderness acres in Montana. The study should include but is not
limited to:

(1) identifying the exact location and size of each wilderness area, wilderness study area, and other land

1 set-aside areas in Montana;

2 (2) determining the current condition of wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or other set-aside
3 acreage, including but not limited to infestations of insects, infestations or presence of noxious weeds, and
4 likelihood of extreme wildfire;

5 (3) providing information, based on the information gathered under subsection (2), on whether or not
6 wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or other types of land set-aside areas are resulting in good land
7 stewardship and land health;

8 (4) identifying the impact, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, that wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, and
9 other types of land set-aside areas have had on watershed health, water quantity, water quality, wildlife habitat,
10 and wildlife populations;

11 (5) analyzing how federal land managers have managed wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, and
12 other land set-aside areas and how they plan on managing these areas in the future; and

13 (6) specifying any impacts, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, that wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, and
14 other land set-aside areas have had on ~~the local area surrounding or near them, including economic, social, and~~
15 ~~environmental impacts~~ LOCAL ECONOMIES SURROUNDING THOSE AREAS, ON THE STATE ECONOMY, AND ON OTHER
16 ASPECTS OF SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
18 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
20 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2006.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
22 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 60th Legislature.

23 - END -